

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

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TAGS: PEPR, MARR, UNSC, IS, LE

SUBJECT:LEBANESE POSITION ON UNSC RESOLUTION

SUMMARY: IN A MEETING IN THE DEPARTMENT MARCH 17 SHORTLY
BEFORE THE UNSC SESSION ON LEBANON, LEBANESE AMBASSADOR
KABBANI TOLD ATHERTON THAT THE LEBANESE WOULD FAVOR A
RESOLUTION CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE, OR THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS TO PREVENT
A RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE. ATHERTON NOTED DESIR-
ABILITY OF DELAYING A VOTE ON THE QUESTION UNTIL AFTER
WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO DAYAN, AND KABBANI INDICATED
AT FIRST THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, BUT LATER INDICATED
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THAT CONTINUED FIGHTING COULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO DELAY
A VOTE. ATHERTON READ KABBANI THE MAIN LINES OF THE U.S.
RESOLUTION, AND KABBANI SAID THIS APPROACH WOULD BE
ACCEPTABLE TO LEBANON AND TO THE ARAB STATES, WHICH WOULD
FOLLOW LEBANON'S LEAD, AS WELL AS TO MODERATE PALESTINIANS.
KABBANI URGED THAT THE FIGHTING END AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
TO PERMIT DELIBERATIONS IN A CALM ATMOSPHERE IN NEW YORK,

AND TO PREVENT THE SITUATION FROM WORSENING. END SUMMARY.

1. LEBANESE AMBASSADOR KABBANI CALLED ON ATHERTON MARCH 17 TO CONVEY LEBANESE VIEW THAT THERE SHOULD BE TWO MAIN ELEMENTS TO ANY SC RESOLUTION: (A) IMMEDIATE, OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, DEPENDING ON LANGUAGE WORKED OUT, AND (B) SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS GUARANTEEING THERE WOULD BE NO RETURN TO INSTABILITY IN THE SOUTH. KABBANI SAID THAT, WHOEVER WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT SITUATION (AND HE BELIEVED ISRAEL WAS), POINT NOW WAS WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. ACCORDING TO KABBANI, LEBANESE VIEW WAS THAT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, AND SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. THE FIGHTING SHOULD END IMMEDIATELY, AND THERE SHOULD BE A CLEAR ISRAELI COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW.

2. ATHERTON SAID IT WAS OBVIOUS WE HAD THE SAME GOAL. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT MARCH 16 HAD BEEN A FLAT STATEMENT THAT WE EXPECTED ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW. WE AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, AND ALSO BELIEVED THAT RESTORATION OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY WAS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT. WE WERE SUPPORTING THE CONCEPT OF A UN FORCE NOT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOL AUTHORITY, BUT TO HELP GOL UNTIL ITS AUTHORITY COULD BE ESTABLISHED.

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3. SINCE WE AGREED ON OBJECTIVES, ATHERTON CONTINUED, WE HAD BETTER DISCUSS MEANS. SOME IN THE ARAB GROUP IN NEW YORK WANTED TO SEPARATE THE TWO ELEMENTS, CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL IN ONE RESOLUTION AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A UN FORCE IN A SECOND RESOLUTION. THE U.S. FELT STRONGLY THE TWO ELEMENTS SHOULD BE A PACKAGE (IN A SINGLE RESOLUTION.)

4. KABBANI SAID THE GOL FELT THE SAME WAY. SOME DIFFERENT ARAB VIEWS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED, BUT THE ARAB GROUP WOULD AGREE TO ANY RESOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, PROVIDED THERE WAS CERTAINTY IT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN A REASONABLY SHORT TIME AND INCLUDED A PROVISION FOR WITHDRAWAL.

5. ATHERTON SAID THAT ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION WAS TIMING. WE WERE IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH THE ISRAELIS, AND THEY HAD TOLD US THEY WANTED TO SEND DAYAN HERE TO TALK SUNDAY EVENING. OUR FEELING WAS THAT DAYAN'S VISIT WOULD BE USEFUL TO TRY TO PERSUADE ISRAELIS OF MERITS OF OUR VIEWS. THE ISRAELIS WERE OF COURSE UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT WITHDRAWAL IMMEDIATELY, TO SAY THE

LEAST, AND NOT NECESSARILY IN FAVOR OF A UN FORCE. WE WOULD THEREFORE REQUEST THAT THERE BE NO VOTE UNTIL WE CAN TALK TO DAYAN. WE WOULD HOPE A RESOLUTION WOULD NOT COME UP FOR A VOTE UNTIL MONDAY, MARCH 20, EVEN IF TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED THAT IT BE TABLED EARLIER.

6. KABBANI SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, BUT NOTED THERE WOULD BE SOME WHO MIGHT ARGUE THAT SC ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE DAYAN'S VISIT SINCE THIS COULD RESULT IN CHANGE IN U.S. VIEWS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HOPED THAT FIGHTING WOULD NOT CONTINUE IN THE SOUTH UNTIL DAYAN'S ARRIVAL. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE FIGHTING
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END, TO ALLOW DELIBERATIONS TO PROCEED IN A CALM ATMOSPHERE. THE ISRAELIS HAD, AFTER ALL, TAKEN MOST MAJOR PALESTINIAN POSITIONS IN THE SOUTH, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOT PUT AN END TO ALL RESISTANCE. IF FIGHTING CONTINUED, KABBANI INDICATED, IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO DELAY A VOTE. THE LONGER THE FIGHTING WENT ON, THE GREATER THE RISKS WERE.

7. ATHERTON AGREED THAT THIS WAS A GOOD POINT, AND WE COULD MAKE IT TO THE ISRAELIS. TIME WAS SHORT. HE THEN READ KABBANI MAIN LINES OF U.S. RESOLUTION (SEPTTEL). KABBANI SAID THIS APPROACH COMPLETELY ACCEPTABLE TO LEBANON, AND HE THOUGHT IT WOULD ALSO BE SUPPORTED BY THE ARAB STATES AND MODERATE PALESTINIANS. IF THE FIGHTING ESCALATED, HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT STORY.

8. ATHERTON ASKED AMBASSADOR KABBANI IF, IN HIS PERSONAL OPINION, A UN FORCE MIGHT BE RESISTED BY PALESTINIANS STANDING BETWEEN IT AND BEIRUT. THIS WAS A QUESTION SURE TO BE ASKED BY CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES. KABBANI SAID HE THOUGHT THIS DEPENDED ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ADF AND THE UN FORCE. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS HAD TALKED TO KHADDAM, AND IT SEEMED THAT THE SYRIANS WERE ANXIOUS TO BRING THE AREA UNDER CONTROL, AND WOULD COOPERATE. ATHERTON AGREED THAT COOPERATION WITH THE SYRIANS WAS IMPORTANT, AND SAID WE WERE CONSULTING WITH THE SYRIANS IN NEW YORK AND IN DAMASCUS.

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10. ATHERTON SAID THAT HE WANTED TO SAY HOW MUCH WE DEPLORED THE FACT THAT INNOCENT LEBANESE CIVILIANS HAD
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BEEN KILLED, AND KABBANI REFERRED TO THE TRAGIC HUMAN
PROBLEM OF 70-80 THOUSAND NEW REFUGEES ADDED TO THE
170 THOUSAND WHO HAD ALREADY FLED THE SOUTH.

11. KABBANI UNDERTOOK TO CONVEY THE U.S. POSITION TO
LEBANESE PERMREP TUENI IMMEDIATELY.
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